



Particulate matter

Particle Pollution

Take a deep breath. Even if the air looks **clear**, it contains gases and microscopic particles. Particulate matter comes from things like wood **heating**, outdoor **burning**, unpaved **roads**, wildfires, and wind-blown **dust**.

Particles are classified by their size. Some of the smallest particles are called fine particles, or **PM_{2.5}**, because they're 2.5 microns in diameter or smaller. PM_{2.5} mostly comes from **burning**, like wood in a **fireplace** or an **outdoor** fire, fuel in a car **engine**, and **industrial** processes. Even though we can't always see them, particles are in the air all around us.

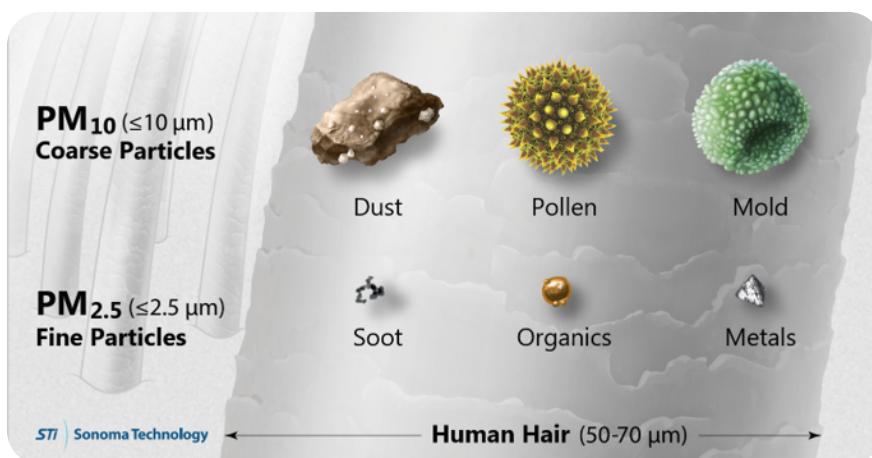
There are also bigger particles called coarse particles, or **PM₁₀**, because they are 10 microns in diameter or smaller. PM₁₀ includes things like **dust**, **pollen**, and **mold**. When it's windy, we can sometimes see dust clouds because the winds pick up particles and carry them into the air. If you see a **dusty** cloud or **pollen** on a windy day, you're seeing PM₁₀ particles floating in the air.

Inhaling tiny particles harms our lungs. The particles are so small they get past our natural defenses and travel deep into our lungs and can even get into our **blood stream**.

Spokane has **good** to **moderate** air quality on most days. However, our air can be smoky and dusty on some days. On those days it is important to reduce our exposure to air pollution. Staying inside when the air is unhealthy and knowing where these particles come from can help us make choices that keep our air **clean** and **healthy**.

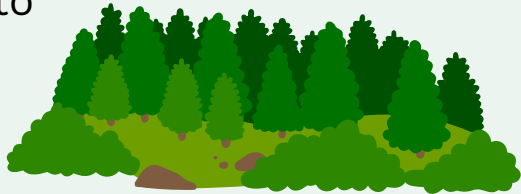


Did you know: Particulate matter is smaller than a strand of human hair!



Summertime Smoky Skies

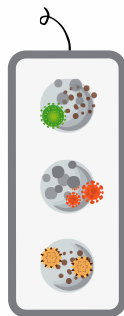
Spokane has had many smoke-filled days during the summer due to wildfires. Fine smoke particles can travel very far. Due to their size, they stay suspended in the air for long periods of time. When it is smoky out, it is important to limit your time outdoors to protect your health.



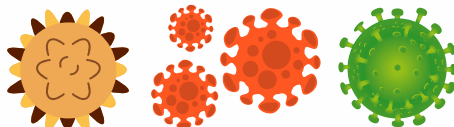
Make a Particle catcher!

You will need:

- 1 index card
- 3 pieces of tape
- 1 string
- 1 pair of scissors



Use the scissors to cut three holes in the index card. Cover these holes with tape on one side. Create a small hole at the top and put the string through it. Hang the card up and after a few days, look at what particles were collected by the tape!



**Enviro
KIDS!**

EnviroKids is a collaborative effort among multiple local environmentally focused agencies in the Spokane Region. We work together to provide locally relevant educational resources to teachers and families.

Air Quality Index



GOOD



MODERATE



UNHEALTHY
FOR SENSITIVE
GROUPS



UNHEALTHY



VERY
UNHEALTHY



HAZARDOUS

Take care. Check the air.

Did you know that not every day is a good day to be outside? Sometimes the air around us can cause harm. Protecting yourself and others is important when the air is unhealthy.

Here's what you can do:

- 1 Check the current air quality regularly. The AQI updates hourly.
- 2 Keep in mind that all children and youth up to 18 years old are considered a sensitive group.
That's the orange category!
- 3 Limit or avoid time outdoors when air quality has dropped below the AQI moderate category.
The library is a great option!



Current air quality:
SpokaneCleanAir.org



Health
Resources:
SRHD.org

Think About It

Did you know that you have the power to help keep our air clean and healthy? Here's how:

- Walk, bike, or carpool instead of driving a car.
- Plant a tree in your yard to clean the air outside.
- Share what you know: tell friends and family about why clean air matters!